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IN A POPPY GARDEN

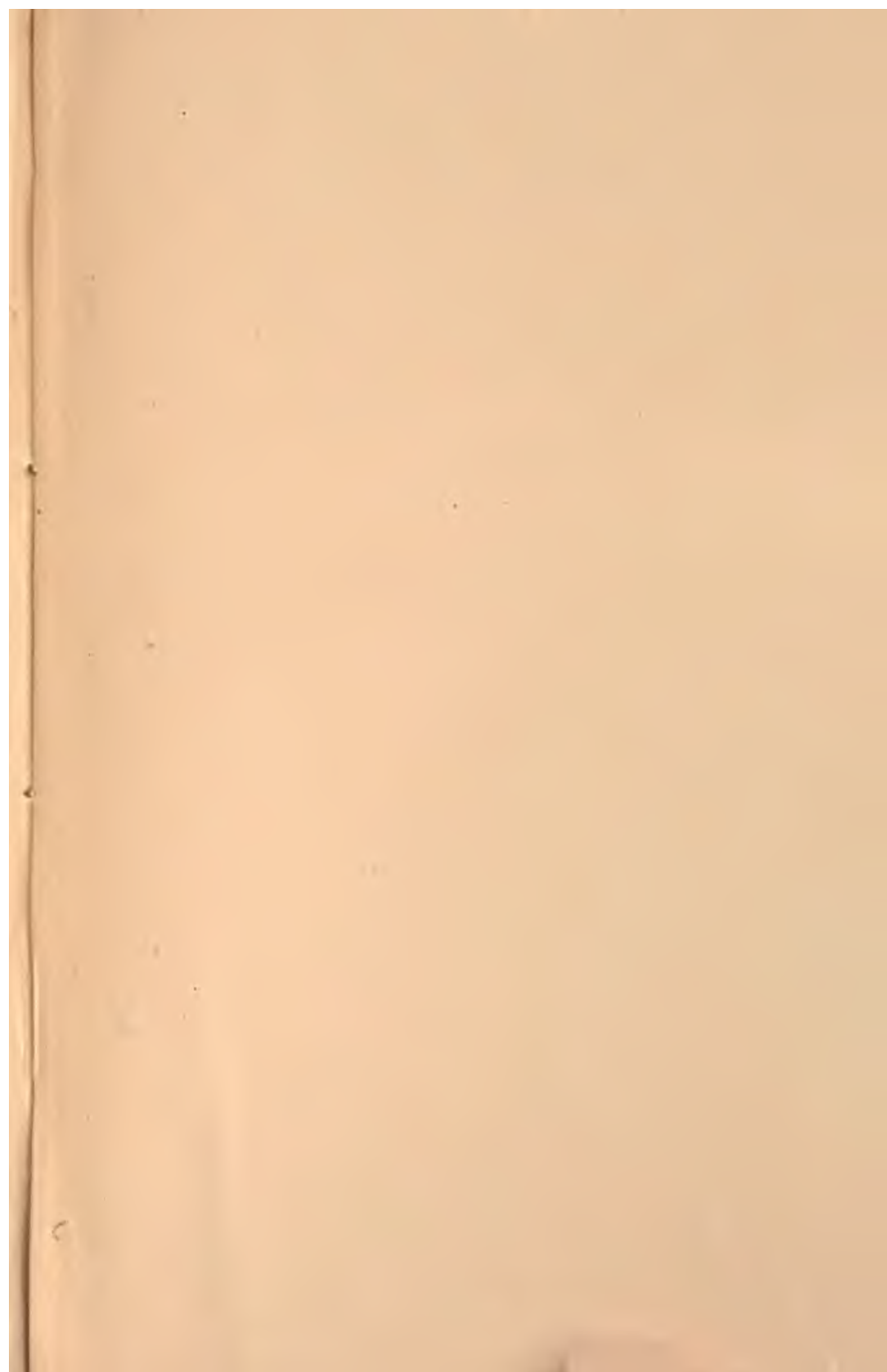
CHARLES FRANCIS GUNDBERS



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IN A POPPY GARDEN

CHARLES FRANCIS SAUNDERS

With Illustrations by

ELISABETH M. HALLOWELL SAUNDERS



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TO HER
WHOSE COMPANIONSHIP IS
AN UNFAILING INCENTIVE TO
NOBLEST LIVING
MY WIFE

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IN A POPPY GARDEN

UPON a summer's day, when the noon-tide air
Was dreamy with the languor of the heat,
The poppies of my garden stirred to speech.
"Master," they seemed to say, "we bring thee gift
Of sleep, and, in sleep's hand, forgetfulness
Of the world's smallnesses and petty prides,
That, waking, thou mayest have a freer heart
For life's nobilities." . . .
Then I awoke. Pray God, the dream come true.



THE OLD HOME

TO one forespent with stress of trade
And schemes of gain in city marts,
There comes a breath of country hay
Wafted from passing carts.

Fades the long line of brick and stone,
The street's rude tumult dies away,
From money-getting for a space
His soul cries holiday.

By that enchantment rapt from town,
He runs, his hand in Memory's,
Up the dear lane to the old home
Beside the tranquil trees.

The garden's myriad cups of bloom
His withered heart with fragrance flood ;
Barn pigeons, cooing, lull to rest
The unrest of his blood.

A harp, untouched these many years,
His soul once more to music wakes,
Swept by the wind that bends the grass
And stirs the meadow brakes.

And with him down the orchard path,
Past spring-house and the pasture wall,
Her spirit walks who taught her child
Of the Love that is o'er all.

. . . .

The vision vanishes, and straight
The street's rude tumult in his ears ;
But in his heart a heavenly strain,
And in his eyes sweet tears.



ON silent field and woodland lies the snow.
The shroud of Flora dead? Thou blind, not so;
For, lo, set thick on leafless shrub and tree,
Buds of spring's burgeoning that's soon to be!

So friendship's silences--replete with hidden power,
Anon to issue in fair deeds, as buds in flower.



· STORM-BEATEN ·

SCARRED of bole and twisted of limb,
By the beach stands an ancient tree,
Bowed by a thousand storms that have swept
Up from the angry sea.

Blasts of the north have rent its crown
But its vigor is unsubdued ;
And it lives not in vain—there is joy in its midst,
It is home to the wild bird's brood.

In the world's workshop toils a man,
Misshapen through ceaseless strife ;
Graceless of form, but his soul is aglow—
He is guard of a woman's life.



KEEP, Lord, Thy child in poverty
 If wealth must dim his eyes
To the beauties of Thy pictured earth,
 To the glory of Thy skies.

And in Thy mercy send defeat
 If victory's fruit must be
Indifference to his neighbor's need—
 If victory cost him Thee !

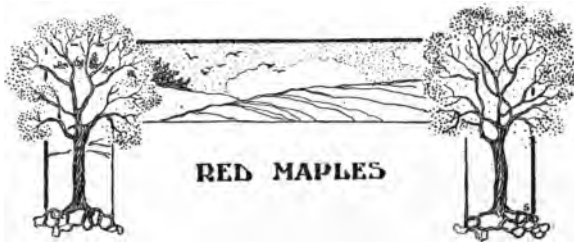


ON snowbound hinges January's portals
Swing open, and I fain would straightway
see

On the new year's untrodden way some token
Of what it bears to me.

But to my straining sight no sign is offered
Of what will be—only gray skies and low,
And boughs that mourn and weary birds ahun-
gered;
Father, may I not know?

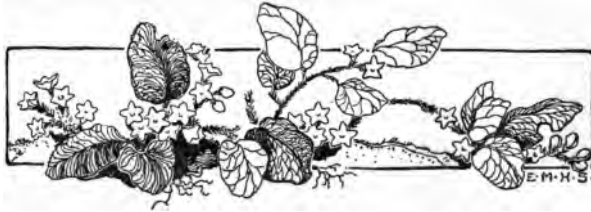
Then, answering, into my soul's still chambers
Steal the sweet memories of the Christmas-tide;
Shall I not trust His providence whose mercies
Over His works abide?



A GAINST the swarthy background of bare
woods
Glow the red maples' flaming flowers in March,
Like torches by the hand of Flora lifted
To light her in the dusk of the young year's dawn
Until the splendor of her risen day.

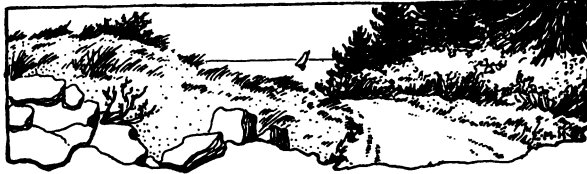


A WIND that blows from out the south,
A sparrow's song, a fleeting shower,
And where but now a snowbank gleamed
The sun lying warm in the heart of a flower.



TRAILING ARBUTUS

IN Winter's footprints as he goes
The russet leaved Mayflower blows ;
As, through the clearing clouds of night,
Stars after storm renew their light ;
Or as at doors where grief has been
Hope knocks once more and enters in.



THE ROAD TO THE SEA

PAST brier and rose, past heath and rill,
Through weary sand, amid bowlders gray,
The old road winds its toilsome way
Out under the shade of the firs on the hill
To the strand of the sunlit sea,
Where the white sails gleam, and all the day
The waves make melody.

So may thy progress be, O soul,
That toilest through heavy sands, oppressed;
Still onward strive, till thy tired feet rest
On the beach where the heavenly breakers roll
Ever in from the bosom of God:
Earth's shadows behind thee, upon His breast
There is balm for the rough ways trod.



AT VALLEY FORGE

THE song of birds floats on the air,
And bees are drowsily a-wing ;
The orchards, white with blossoms, fling
Cool shadows on the grassy ground
Warm with the pulses of the spring ;
And little children play around
The rusted cannon of the king.

By that grim mouth which once belched death,
But now has known of war surcease
These hundred years, the violets nod ;
And dandelions light the sod
Once dark with blood of men. Dear God,
We thank thee for the day of peace.



A HOMELY plot beside a barn—
Fall gently, rain, where this garden grows,
And touch with tempered beam, O sun,
These furrows and these hallowed rows.

For here my fathers delved and sought
A frugal living from the sod,
Here reverent walked at close of day
And listened for the voice of God ;

Reaping a double harvest here—
The body's meat, the spirit's peace,
Knowledge that God is Lord of life
To send or hold the earth's increase.



HEIMWEH

BEHIND the hills the sun has set,
The dusk and dew are falling ;
Far down the field the milker's voice
Floats faint, his late herd calling.

Before my weary feet the road
Into the night is tending ;
A hush is on my lonely soul—
O night, that thou wert ending !

What is it like a benison
Into my heart comes stealing ?
Beside the cots of Christendom
The children now are kneeling.



THE pleasantest place on earth to me
Is a haunted house that I know ;
The windows are open toward the sun ;
By the door the violets blow ;
All summer the breezes bring odor of mint,
And the robins come and go.

For this is the home of the friend that I love ;
And the spirits that haunt the spot
Are spirits of sympathy and cheer,
And the trust that wavers not.



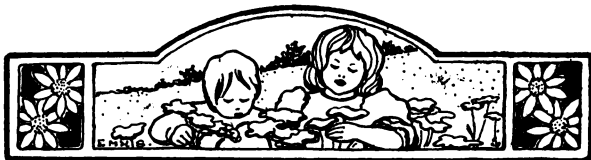
WHEN Love grows old, may Love's
strength stay
As was the strength of Love's young day,
But mightier ; as wine grown old
Is better grown, or coin of gold
Shines brighter as wears dim the stamp
By veteran use. So may Love's lamp
Glow ever with a purer light
Till Heaven's dawn illume Earth's night.



· EVENSONG ·

THE daylight fails : across the river's reach
Faintly the village bells sound on the breeze;
The rippling waves come singing to the beach
And stir the reeds to soft antiphonies.

Joy lingers, though the darkling night be near,
Though airs grow chill and birds be in their
 nests ;
Lulled by the cricket's quiet note of cheer
And frogs' shrill chorusing, the tired world rests.



AS LITTLE CHILDREN.

MAKE ours, dear Lord, the children's joy
In earth's simplicities—
The beauty of the fields' wild bloom,
The shadows, sun and breeze ;
Attune our ears to song of birds,
To the brooklet's melodies.

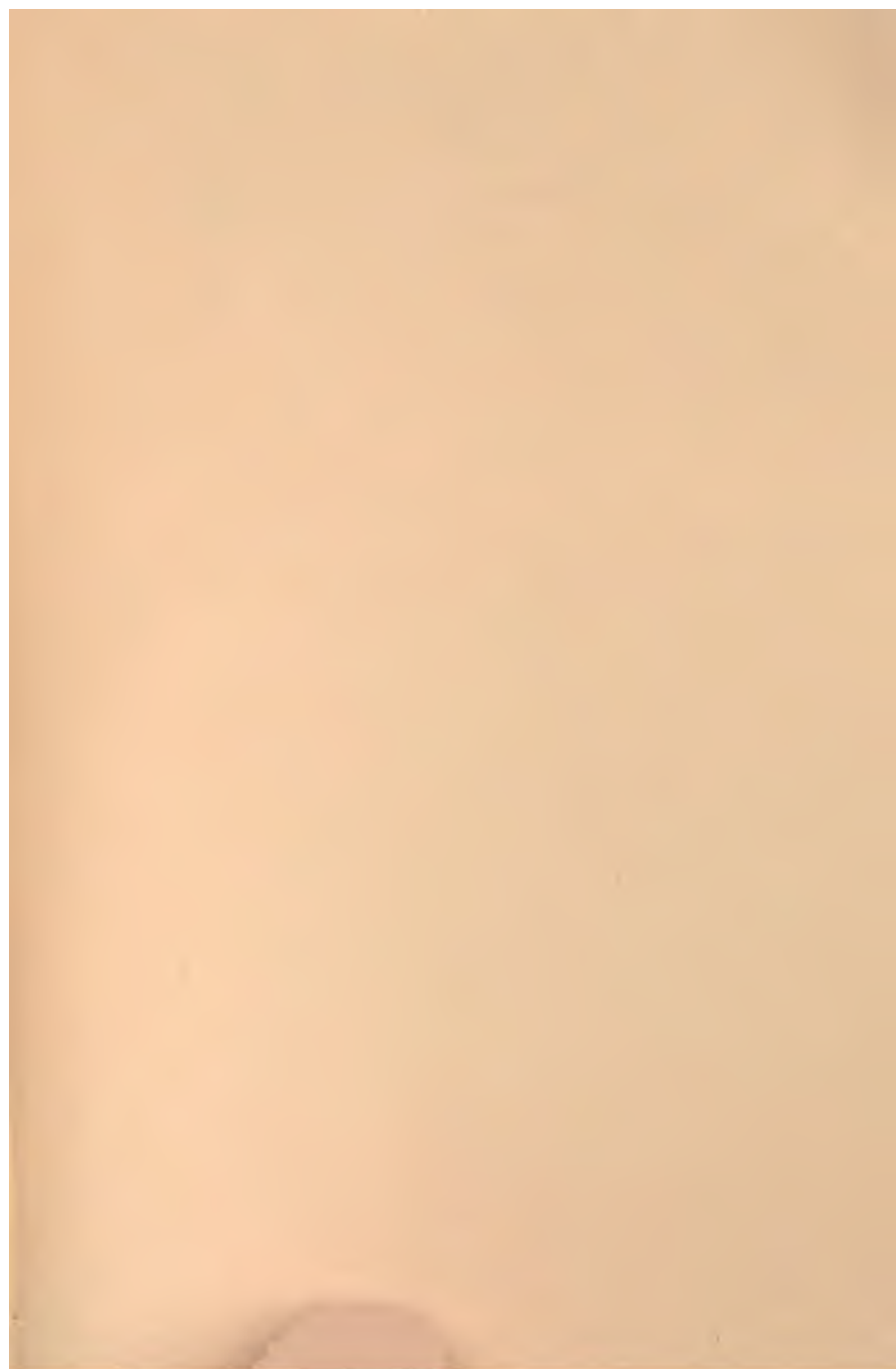
As children crowned with Thy own flowers,
Our hearts with Thy grace bind,
So in this world of Thine may we
Walk not as deaf or blind,
But joyous in the common gifts
Vouchsafed to all mankind.



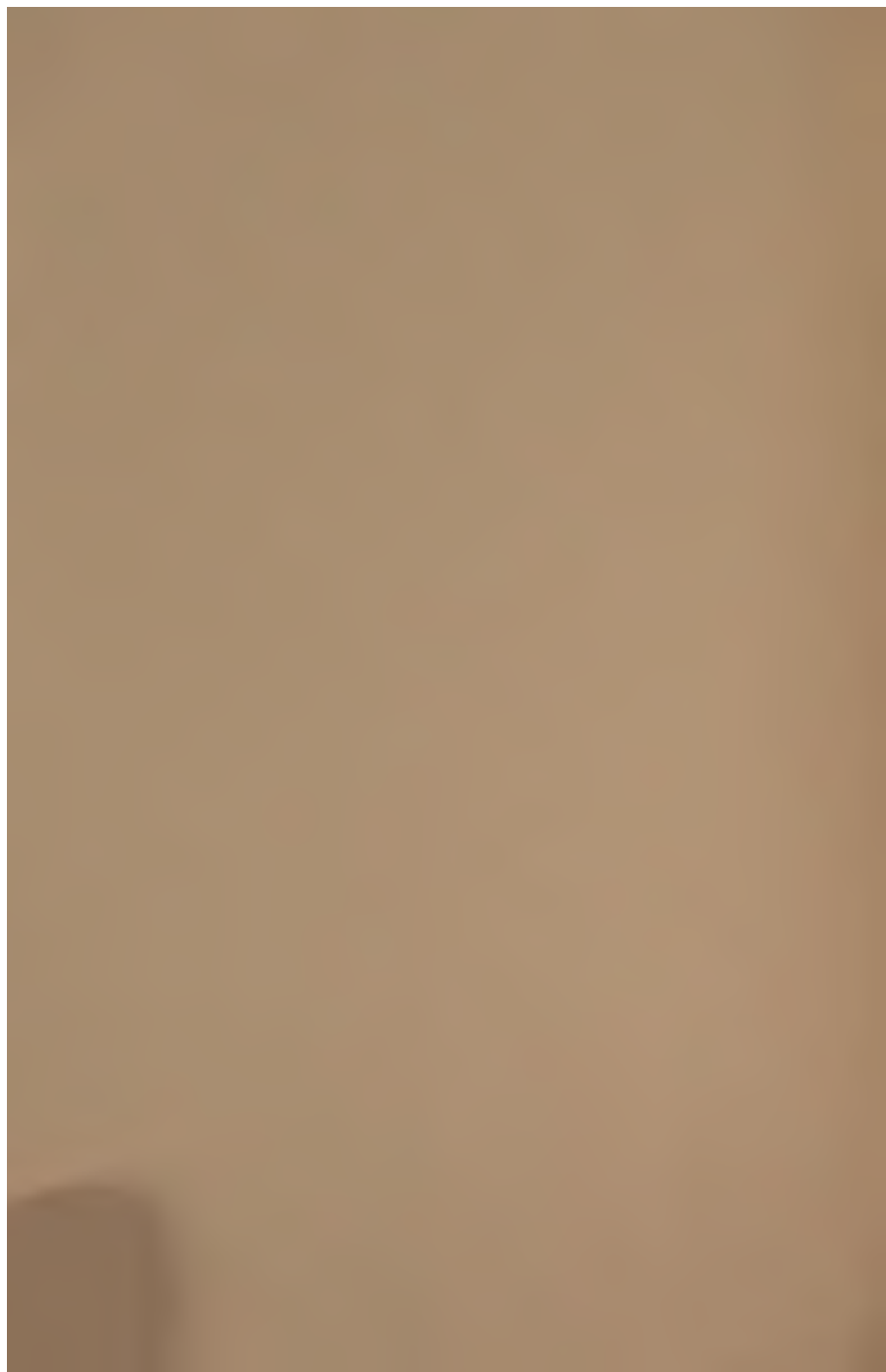
THE FAIRY'S NIGHT SONG

I'M not so lazy as I look,
Sitting in this woodland nook ;
For, from rising of the sun
Till the restless day was done,
There was work cut out for me,
Kept me busy as a bee—
Wiping dewdrops from the grass,
So that folk dryshod might pass ;
Cracking seeds and guiding shoots,
Bearing warmth to ripening fruits,
Opening buds and tinting flowers,
Sprinkling thirsty land with showers ;
Teaching baby butterflies
How to mount up toward the skies,
And the brooklet how to sing—
These and many another thing
I've been doing. That is why,
When the dark comes in the sky

And the sun has gone to bed,
And the round moon lifts her head
Coyly on the old earth smiling,
Lovers to their trysts beguiling—
While some fairies are for dancing,
Cutting capers or romancing,
I like best to take my ease
Underneath the whispering trees,
Smoke my pipe and sniff the breeze.











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